

## Health Fair honored by Senator Lugar



Photo by Laura O'shaughnessy

The Black and Minority Health Fair was recently presented the 2004 Dick Lugar Run/Walk Health & Fitness Award. Shown here are (left to right): Patrica Ewing, Maternal and Child Health; Nellie Simpson, Local Liaison Office; Senator Lugar; Martha Bonds, Office of Minority Health; and JoeAnn Gupton, Office of Minority Health. Not pictured is Nadine Reese, Administrative Services.

The Indiana State Department of Health's Black and Minority Health Fair was recently honored for providing "outstanding" health services to Indiana's minority population.

The 2004 Dick Lugar Run/Walk Health & Fitness Award was presented to Health Fair Director Martha Bonds, Office of Minority Health, at an awards banquet on Sept. 18.

"We are so proud to receive this award," said Bonds. "It is very nice to be recognized for the services we provide."

In her speech announcing the winners, Charlene Lugar said, "Senator Lugar attending this health fair in July commented on its impressive array of medical screenings available as well as the obvious appreciation of the attendees for the opportunity to receive these important services."

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## Field staffers travel many miles to help protect Hoosiers

Photo by Julie Fletcher

Among the many positions at the Indiana State Department of Health that have been created with funds from federal bioterrorism preparedness grants are more than 20 new field positions.

Epidemiologists, public health administrators, and public information officers are now stationed at various locations throughout the state to help with planning and response activities at the local level.

However, don't expect to find them at their home bases very often, as they spend countless hours



Field Public Information Officers (left to right) Keylee Wright, Kristen Garcia, and Rachel Reynolds recently joined the Office of Public Affairs staff.

on the road performing their duties.

The field epidemiologists, or "field epis," as they are more com-

monly known, were the first to begin their new duties last year.

Pam Pontones with the Epidemiology Resource Center oversees the field epis as they detect and investigate possible disease outbreaks at the local level.

"Having the field epis in place has really decreased our response time in assisting with disease outbreak investigations," said Pontones. "It

has also helped us improve our coordination with local health departments. We are now able to share information with the local

(See FIELD STAFF – Page 4)

# ISDH Web site: A behind-the-scenes look

**W**ith over 85,000 pages, the [Indiana State Department of Health's Web site](#) is the largest in state government.

Because the site is so big, nearly 15 million "hits," or visits, are recorded in a year, and nearly 3,000 pages are downloaded daily. Maintaining all of that information is Robert St. John, ISDH Web programmer.

As a designer and programmer, St. John spends most of his time developing new pages and adding information to the site. The first step, he said, is to fully grasp the information he is working with – and the messages that need to be displayed.

"I always examine the types of technology available that would best be used to communicate the information in the most clear, concise manner possible," he said. "This might simply be creating static text, HTML (hypertext markup language) pages, or it might involve using a visual display that is tied to data, such as the West Nile virus map."

The vast amount of health-related information on the site – from health data and statistics, to news releases, to nursing home report cards – all must meet certain requirements.

Special modifications – such as text descriptions of images – have been made to the site to meet the Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility standards.

Generally, St. John explained, these standards require that individuals with disabilities must have access to, and use of, information and data that is comparable to that provided to the public without disabilities.

As a state agency, the State Department of Health's Web site is part of the accessIndiana Web portal, which recently placed second in the 2004 "Best of the Web" contest.

"The Web site must also meet the State of Indiana's common look and feel specifications," St. John said.

St. John is also the "gatekeeper" of all of the information on the site, and works with 20 "stewards," or agency employees, that update content within their specific program areas.

"It is my responsibility to ensure that the pages are built correctly, and then post them on the site," he said.

While visitors to the site view polished, organized pages, there can literally be pages and pages of code behind a single item on a page, according to St. John.

For example, the West Nile virus map that identifies statewide activity contains over 3,200 lines of "Action-scripting," or code, alone."

The behind-the-scenes work includes design layout, design work, using software to "build" the page, and loading the page onto the Web site server.

"All of this can take anywhere from a day to several days to complete, depending on the complexity of the project," said St. John.

Future plans for the site include making data that has been gathered since 1978 available on the Web (keeping in mind state and federal regulations, along with privacy laws).

"When this is completed, the end user will benefit immensely," said St. John.

"Instead of having to delve through layers and layers of pages to find the specific information they want, the same results can be





Photo by Julie Fletcher

**Web Programmer Robert St. John oversees the State Department of Health's 85,000-page Web site.**

achieved by the user simply answering a few questions."

Even with over six years of Web designing experience, St. John finds maintaining such a large site a challenge and a learning experience – but an enjoyable one in a field he loves.

"The easiest part of my day," he said with a chuckle, "is simply turning on my computer."

The Indiana State Department of Health *Express* is a biweekly publication for ISDH employees and stakeholders. Words in blue are links that you can access directly if you read the *Express* online. To submit news items, call (317) 234-2817 or send information to: ISDH *Express*, Office of Public Affairs, 2 N. Meridian St., Section 6G, Indianapolis, IN 46204-3003. Inquiries should be directed to:

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# Computer security a 'necessity' for all employees

It would only take seconds for someone to sit at your computer and send an e-mail on your behalf, or view confidential information stored on your hard drive. And, according to Al Ford, ITS, it all could happen without your ever knowing it – causing havoc to you and the agency.



“Computer security is a necessity,” said Ford. “You should never leave your workstation connected to the network unattended. It simply invites misuse.”

Since various departments within the State Department of Health fall under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and financial information is processed in many areas, it is crucial

to safeguard confidential information, said Ford.

“We don’t take this topic lightly,” he said. “The unauthorized disclosure of confidential information could cause this agency to face financial penalties.”

Ford suggests two easy safeguards that all employees should implement. One is to install a screensaver password that locks the computer when the screensaver is displayed. Locking workstations when walking away from them is another.

The screensaver password can be installed by following these steps:

- ✦ Select the “start” button
- ✦ Select the “settings” option
- ✦ Click on the “control panel” option
- ✦ Select the “display” icon
- ✦ Select the “screensaver tab”

✦ Click on “on resume, password protect” box

The workstation can be locked by hitting the following keyboard buttons at the same time: “control,” “alt,” and “delete.” A “NetWare Security” menu will appear and the “lock workstation” tab should be selected. To unlock the workstation, simply hit “control,” “alt,” and “delete” again, and type in your password when prompted.

“It is relatively easy to set up a screensaver password, and to lock your workstation,” said Ford. “The Help Desk is more than willing to help set these up, as well.”

Ford also suggests employees change passwords often, and to keep in mind the Help Desk does not have access to the passwords, and can only reset them when they are forgotten. For more info. contact the Help Desk at 233-6911.

## Learn about school health programs at Oct. 25 session

Information on the State Department of Health’s newly formed Coordinated School Health Program will be presented to staff at an information session from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Monday, Oct. 25 in Rice Auditorium.

Tanya Parrish, program director, will provide an overview of the Coordinated School Health Program, what various Indiana schools are doing to promote health, the importance of parental and community involvement, and specific ways parents and grandparents can play a part in improving school health.

Key areas that this program covers include: obesity; nutrition; physical activity; and tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

“This is a great opportunity for agency employees to become familiar with this program,” said Parrish. “It will also provide employees that are parents or grandparents of school-aged children with information on how they can support a coordinated approach to school health within their children’s schools.”

The session is coordinated by the State Department of Health’s Safety Education and Training Committee (see related story).

Those interested in attending should e-mail Marc LoCascio, ITS, at [mlocasci@isdh.state.in.us](mailto:mlocasci@isdh.state.in.us).

Employees should obtain approval from their supervisor to attend this session.

### Employee presentation opportunities

The State Department of Health’s Safety Education and Training Committee is looking for employees to share their knowledge of health or safety-related topics with fellow co-workers

The committee is looking for individuals to make 45-60-minute presentations to staff on interesting topics, especially agency program-related topics. Sessions are held in the spring and autumn, and will also be videotaped for future use.

Past presentations include food preparations safety, bioterrorism awareness, child safety, and severe weather safety.

For more info., contact Marc LoCascio at [mlocasci@isdh.state.in.us](mailto:mlocasci@isdh.state.in.us).



## Hoosier Olympians welcomed home by Governor Kernan

While many of us struggle to increase our daily physical activity, there is a certain group of Hoosiers who have made the ultimate commitment to fitness. A group who day in and day out train their bodies to be the best in the world. These Hoosiers are our Olympians from Indiana.

On Tuesday, Sept. 7, fifteen athletes returning from the Olympic Games in Athens made the trip to the State House Rotunda for a welcome home reception where Governor Kernan named them Sagamores of the Wabash, the state's highest honor. Athletes of

all shapes and sizes brought friends and family to the event, where they were the guests of honor.

Although most of us will never have the opportunity to compete in the Olympic Games, there is something that everyone one of us can learn from these dedicated athletes.

All of them have the same thoughts running through their heads when the alarm goes off in the morning, and it is time for another early morning work out.

The difference is that the decision on whether or not to get up and train was made months or years earlier. They have removed

that decision from their daily lives. In the words of Nike, they "just do it."

While that level of commitment is not suitable for everyone, the lesson can still be applied.

Challenge yourself to make physical activity a daily habit, period. Whether walking your steps for the Governor's Challenge, biking to work, running, or swimming, do something everyday to get yourself moving.

You will be rewarded with the gold medal of better health and quality of life.

—Eric Neuburger

## Field Staff

*(Continued from page 1)*

health departments more quickly and efficiently."

The State Department of Health is also in the process of putting 10 public health administrators out in the field, one for each of the state's 10 public health preparedness districts. Several are already on the job.

These staffers work directly with local health departments on a number of initiatives, and serve as an important liaison between the State Department of Health and the local agencies.

Among other things, they help the local health departments develop various plans to respond to a possible act of bioterrorism, or other large-scale public health threat.

They also help the local health departments adopt Mutual Aid Agreements, and share information regarding federal and state initiatives that can assist the districts in establishing priorities for the use of their bioterrorism preparedness funds.

The most recent field positions to be created were public information officers (PIOs). These five positions are responsible for helping local health departments create crisis communication plans so they will be prepared to communicate important information to the public efficiently and effectively during a public health crisis.

In addition, the field PIOs provide spokesperson training to local officials, and would also be available to help local officials with various public information efforts in the event of a significant bioterrorism event, or disease outbreak.

All of the field staffers participate in various exercises in their respective districts. They also come to Indianapolis periodically for additional training and meetings, and to share their experiences with each other.

They then head back to their districts to continue their efforts to improve Indiana's preparedness for any sort of public health threat.

—Andy Zirkle

## Award

*(Continued from page 1)*

The Dick Lugar Health and Fitness Award was established in 1984 to honor professionals and volunteers from across Indiana who have made outstanding contributions to their communities in promoting fitness, health, awareness, and education.

The award is in memory of Ray Sears, an Indiana athlete who served as a track and field coach for Butler University, and who promoted a healthy and fit lifestyle throughout life.

The Black and Minority Health Fair, which will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> year in 2005, offers free health education and counseling services to address issues affecting the health of minority populations in Indiana.

CONGRATULATIONS!